

the on-board computer;

(b) communicating diagnostic trouble code signals from the on-board computer to the code reader;

(c) disconnecting the code reader from the on-board computer;

(d) generating a visual output signal representative of the passed or problem status of the vehicle;

(e) in the event that the visual output signal indicates a problem status only, then connecting the code reader to a personal computer;

(f) communicating from the code reader to a personal computer respective ones of the diagnostic trouble code signals which are related to a problem status of the vehicle;

(g) communicating the respective ones of the diagnostic trouble code signals which are related to a problem status of the vehicle from the personal computer to a remote computer, the remote computer being configured to correlate the diagnostic trouble code signals to problem description data for diagnosing the vehicle; and

(h) communicating from the remote computer to the personal computer problem description data correlated to the respective ones of the diagnostic trouble code signals related to a problem status of the vehicle.

a2 4. (Amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein (a) comprises utilizing a cable connection for communicating with the on-board computer, in a read only mode, using the code reader.

13. (Amended) A vehicle diagnosis system for diagnosing a status of a vehicle, the vehicle having an on-board computer for generating diagnostic trouble code signals, the diagnostic trouble code signals being related to a passed status of the vehicle or a problem status of the vehicle, the system comprising:

Q3 a wireless, hand held code reader configured to electronically communicate with the on-board computer, in a read only mode, for receiving diagnostic trouble code signals from the on-board computer, the code reader having an output device for indicating a passed or problem status of the vehicle in response to only receipt of the diagnostic trouble code signals from the on-board computer; and

a personal computer configured to electronically communicate with the code reader, in a read only mode, for receiving from the code reader diagnostic trouble code signals related to a problem status of the vehicle, the personal computer having a remote electronic communications interface, the remote electronic communications interface being configured to establish an electronic communications

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link between the personal computer and a remote computer for transmitting the diagnostic trouble code signals to the remote computer.

22. (Amended) A portable code reader for diagnosing a status of a vehicle, the vehicle having an on-board computer for generating a diagnostic trouble code signals, the diagnostic trouble code signals being related to a passed status of the vehicle or a problem status of the vehicle, the code reader comprising:

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an on-board computer connection interface configured to electronically communicate with the on-board computer, in a read only mode, for receiving diagnostic trouble code signals from the on-board computer;

an output device configured to indicate a passed or a problem status of the vehicle in response to receipt of the diagnostic trouble code signals from the on-board computer and an inconclusive status of the vehicle in response to a failure to receive a diagnostic trouble code signals from the on-board computer;

a code reader memory configured to store diagnostic trouble code signals received from the on-board computer connection interface related to a problem status of the vehicle; and

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a personal computer connection interface configured to electronically communicate with a personal computer, in a read only mode, for transmitting the stored diagnostic trouble code signals after the computer connection interface is removed from connection to the on-board computer.

26. (New) The method as recited in Claim 1 wherein the step of generating a visual output signal proceed independent of any communication with the personal computer.

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27. (New) The system as recited in Claim 13, wherein the output device indicates a passed or problem status of which is independent of any communication with the personal computer.

28. (New) The code reader as recited in Claim 22, wherein the output device indicates a passed or problem status of the which independent of any connection to the personal computer.
